

Thank you for your consideration of my request, and I look forward to further opportunities to work with you this Congress.

Sincerely,

ROB BISHOP,
Chairman,
Committee on Natural Resources.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC, August 31, 2016.

Hon. ROB BISHOP,
Chairman, House Committee on Natural Resources, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for consulting with the Committee on Foreign Affairs on your committee-reported text of H.R. 4245, a bill to exempt exportation of certain echinoderms and mollusks from licensing requirements under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

I agree that the Foreign Affairs Committee may be discharged from further action on this bill so that it may proceed expeditiously to the Floor, subject to the understanding that this waiver does not in any way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of the Foreign Affairs Committee, or prejudice its jurisdictional prerogatives on this bill or similar legislation in the future. The Committee also reserves the right to seek an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this bill, and would appreciate your support for any such request.

I ask that you place our exchange of letters into the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the bill. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work with you as this measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

EDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman.

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Maine (Ms. PINGREE), the sponsor of this bill.

Ms. PINGREE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. BEYER) for yielding the time, and I also thank my colleague from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for speaking in support of this as well.

I rise today in support of H.R. 4245, a bill that will end the practice of export inspections for sea urchin, sea cucumbers, squid, and cuttlefish that are being shipped overseas as part of our Nation's fisheries and fish processing industry.

At the outset, I want to thank Chairman BISHOP, subcommittee Chairman FLEMING, Ranking Member GRIJALVA, and my good friend from California, Ranking Member HUFFMAN, for their support and help in getting this bill through the committee and to the House floor today. I want to recognize my friend and colleague from Maine (Mr. POLIQUIN) who has been an original cosponsor of this bill and a tireless supporter of this effort.

To better understand this bill, I would like to tell you a little bit about the sea urchin industry in Maine, which is a critical part of our marine economy. Second only to California, the sea urchin industry in Maine brings over \$5.4 million to our State every year and supports 600 jobs, which includes harvesters up and down our beautiful coast.

Companies in Maine also process urchins that are harvested here, as well as those from Canada and Chile, before being exported overseas. In Japan and other parts of Asia, urchins are a valuable delicacy, known in sushi restaurants as uni. They are also a delicacy here in the United States and are very highly regarded.

Urchins imported to Maine from other countries are inspected by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service upon entering the country. Relatively recently, the Fish and Wildlife Service has begun inspecting the products once again before leaving the country. The policy change ended a longtime exemption that urchins had received, an exemption that lobster and other shellfish continue to receive.

Over 18 months ago, I started hearing from urchin processors in Maine who reported problems with this recent change. Sometimes the urchins sat in a hot warehouse in New York—usually at the JFK Airport—for days waiting for an inspection, possibly resulting in the loss of a very valuable and highly perishable product.

Since these are such a perishable product, despite the harvesters' and processors' speedy work to get the urchins ready for shipment, once they reached the inspection point in New York, they often came to a halt.

I immediately started working with the Fish and Wildlife Service to try and find a solution. Even though we haven't always seen eye to eye with the Fish and Wildlife Service, they have been very willing to hear our concerns, work with us on particular problems, and try to make things easier on our harvesters and processors.

We had a very recent example. Last Friday afternoon, my office received a call from an urchin processor who had \$50,000 worth of product soon to be sitting at the JFK Airport. The Fish and Wildlife Service had closed this Friday, meaning that the urchins would be left over a 3-day weekend. We were able to get it cleared, but it was a very close call. Stories like this make it clear that the only real solution is to get rid of this duplicative inspection, and this is what this bill would do.

After working with the Fish and Wildlife Service, talking to urchin harvesters, and visiting a processing plant in my district, I firmly believe that these extra inspections are unnecessary. There is no reason why sea urchins should be treated differently than shellfish.

These burdensome inspections create a great deal of risk for valuable exports and too much uncertainty for a job-creating industry. As communities on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts deal with challenges to commercial fishing and working waterfronts, it is critical that Congress do everything it can to support successful industries like sea urchins in Maine or squid and cuttlefish in California, Rhode Island, and other States.

I am very proud to have introduced this bipartisan legislation, and I en-

courage my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of this piece of legislation.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4245, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill to exempt exportation of certain echinoderms and mollusks from licensing requirements under the Endangered Species Act of 1973."

ESTABLISHMENT OF A VISITOR SERVICES FACILITY ON THE ARLINGTON RIDGE TRACT

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4789) to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to establish a structure for visitor services on the Arlington Ridge tract, in the area of the U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4789

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. DEFINITION.

In this Act, the term "Arlington Ridge tract" means the parcel of Federal land located in Arlington County, Virginia, known as the Nevius Tract and transferred to the Department of the Interior in 1953, that is bounded generally by—

- (1) Arlington Boulevard (United States Route 50) to the north;
- (2) Jefferson Davis Highway (Virginia Route 110) to the east;
- (3) Marshall Drive to the south; and
- (4) North Meade Street to the west.

SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF A VISITOR SERVICES FACILITY ON THE ARLINGTON RIDGE TRACT.

Notwithstanding section 2863(g) of Public Law 107–107, the Secretary of the Interior is authorized to construct a structure for visitor services to include a public restroom facility on the Arlington Ridge tract in the area of the U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. BEYER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the United States Marine Corps War Memorial in Arlington, Virginia, honors the many members of the Marine Corps who have given their lives fighting for our country. This is one of the most popular memorials in the area, attracting over 1 million visitors annually and hosting several popular events, such as the Summer Sunset Parades and the Marine Corps Marathon.

Despite the popularity, the site only has portable toilets and no permanent bathroom facilities for visitors. This bipartisan, straightforward bill introduced by Congressman DON BEYER authorizes the construction of a visitor services center that includes permanent restroom facilities.

Due to a generous donation from billionaire David Rubenstein, this new visitor service center will come at no cost to the taxpayer. This new facility represents a more respectful and permanent solution to improve visitor experiences at this important site.

I urge the adoption of the measure.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BEYER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4789 is an uncontroversial technical provision authorizing construction of a small restroom facility on the grounds of the Marine Corps Memorial, also known as the Iwo Jima Memorial.

Recently, billionaire David Rubenstein donated more than \$5 million to the National Park Foundation to be used for repairs and rehabilitation of the memorial and the surrounding grounds.

Because of the donation, the National Park Service was able to look closely at the needs of the memorial and the visitors who come there, and one amenity it clearly lacks is public restrooms. At the moment, the only restrooms available are Park Service-supplied porta potties.

With visitation steady and possibly increasing because of the memorial rehabilitation, there is a clear need to address this deficiency in visitor services, and this is especially concerning because this is a very popular destination for veterans, not all of whom are able-bodied.

The current statutory ban on additional structures on the Marine Corps Memorial dates to 2002, and it was part of this debate over the location of the Air Force Memorial. Well, in the meantime, the Air Force Memorial was ultimately located somewhere else, but we still need this legislation to authorize construction of restroom facilities.

The provision has already been passed by the Senate, and I am pleased by its consideration in the House. The National Park Service has long wanted

to build a small structure with water and restrooms at the Marine Corps Memorial because there are no such facilities within several miles, and this is in keeping with the broader policy of improving accessibility of all the memorials on and around the National Mall.

I am particularly thankful for Mr. COOK's support in putting this together and for Mr. THOMPSON's leadership and for the chairman's support.

I urge all Members to support this bipartisan bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of this bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4789.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1730

INNOVATION IN OFFSHORE LEASING ACT

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5577) to amend the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct offshore oil and gas lease sales through Internet-based live lease sales, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5577

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Innovation in Offshore Leasing Act".

SEC. 2. INTERNET-BASED OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS LEASE SALES.

(a) AUTHORIZATION.—Section 8 of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1337) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(q) INTERNET-BASED OIL AND GAS LEASE SALES.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—In order to modernize the Nation's offshore leasing program to ensure the best return to the Federal taxpayer, reduce fraud, and ensure a fair and competitive leasing process, the Secretary may conduct lease sales under this section through Internet-based, sealed-bidding methods.

"(2) SALE REQUIREMENTS.—Sales conducted under paragraph (1) shall ensure—

"(A) a publicly and freely accessible digital delivery of the bid reading process, such as live Internet streaming, and an option for bidders to submit bids electronically;

"(B) a bidder verification process that discloses to bidders, by no later than 5 p.m. Central Time of the day before each sale, a list of all bids submitted (including the person submitting each bid) on each lease tract without disclosing bid amounts;

"(C) the ability for a bidder to correct a possible misreading of a submitted bid;

"(D) a designee from within the Office of the Solicitor of the Department of the Interior to act

as an independent, third-party observer who will be present during the bid reading process to prevent wrongdoing, independently certify the bidding process, and maintain transparency;

"(E) data security measures to ensure bidder data is kept secure; and

"(F) a participant survey soliciting voluntary feedback from bidders on the bidding process.

"(3) TRANSPARENCY IN SALE-DAY STATISTICS.—

"(A) REQUIREMENT.—The Secretary shall publicly disclose statistical data regarding each lease sale under this subsection, on the day the sale is executed.

"(B) INCLUDED DATA.—Among data disclosed, the Secretary shall include—

"(i) the total value of high bids;

"(ii) the number of tracts offered;

"(iii) the number of acres offered;

"(iv) the number of tracts receiving bids;

"(v) the number of acres receiving bids;

"(vi) the total number of bids;

"(vii) the average number of bids per tract;

"(viii) the total number of bidders participating;

"(ix) bidding statistics by water depth;

"(x) the name of the entity that submitted each bid, the amount of the bid, and the tract for which the bid was submitted;

"(xi) of tracts receiving bids, the number of bids per tract by water depth;

"(xii) the tract receiving the greatest number of bids;

"(xiii) the tract receiving the highest bid; and

"(xiv) any other statistical data that may be disclosed in accordance with this Act.

"(C) DATA TRANSPARENCY.—The Secretary shall ensure all data regarding lease sales under this subsection is publicly available and easily accessible, free of charge, on the Internet, including for download and aggregation in machine-readable format."

(b) MODERNIZING LEASING THROUGH COLLABORATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Before conducting the first Internet-based lease sale under the amendment made by this section, the Secretary of the Interior shall issue a request for information from each company present for bidding at the ten most recent oil and gas lease sales conducted by the Secretary under the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, in order to provide the bidding public sufficient opportunity to share innovative ideas, methods, and concerns regarding Internet-based leasing.

(2) INTEGRATION OF INFORMATION.—The Secretary shall review, evaluate, and integrate suggestions and concerns collected under paragraph (1) as the Secretary works to modernize the offshore leasing process through Internet-based leasing options.

(3) USER WORKSHOP.—The Secretary shall conduct not less than one user workshop with viable bidders prior to conducting an Internet-based lease sale to provide the bidding public with an opportunity to beta test any prototype of an Internet-based leasing platform.

(c) DEADLINE FOR GULF OF MEXICO LEASE SALE.—Not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Interior shall conduct at least one Internet-based lease sale under the amendment made by subsection (a) for leasable acreage in the Gulf of Mexico.

(d) EVALUATING INTERNET-BASED OFFSHORE LEASING.—Not later than 90 days after the third Internet-based lease sale conducted under the amendment made by subsection (a), the Secretary of the Interior shall analyze all such Internet-based lease sales and transmit to Congress a thorough analysis of the sales. The analysis shall include—

(1) estimates of increases or decreases in such lease sales, compared to sales conducted by non-Internet-based bidding, in—

(A) the number of bidders;

(B) the average amount of bids;

(C) the highest bid; and

(D) the lowest bid;